

# Good Up High, Bad Nearby Ozone and Your Health

## Ozone Facts

- ▶ Ozone is a gas in the earth's upper atmosphere and at ground level. Ozone can be good or bad.
- ▶ "Good" ozone is in the earth's upper atmosphere, 10 to 30 miles above the earth's surface.
- ▶ "Bad" ozone is at ground level. It is formed when pollution made by cars, power plants, chemical plants and other sources reacts with heat and sunlight.
- ▶ **Even small doses of ozone can:**
  - cause serious lung problems;
  - aggravate asthma (i.e., increase use of asthma medicine, increase coughing, increase wheezing, etc.)
  - make it hard for even healthy adults to breathe;
  - cause lung tissue to become inflamed (i.e., irritated);
  - weaken the body's defense system.  
You may become more sensitive to illnesses like bronchitis and pneumonia.
- ▶ Ozone season is May 1–September 30.

## What You Can Do

- ▶ **Ways to protect your health against ozone pollution:**
  - Watch the daily ozone forecast.
  - Do outdoor activities early in the morning and after 6:00 p.m.
  - Do outdoor exercise early in the morning or after 6:00 p.m.
  - On bad ozone days, pay attention to any breathing or lung problems you might have.

## Air Quality Index

The Air Quality Index (AQI) describes the levels of ozone and air pollution. High AQIs mean unhealthy air.

AIR QUALITY INDEX		
Index Values	Descriptors	Cautionary Statements for Ozone
0 to 50	Good	None.
51 to 100	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion.
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.
151 to 200	Unhealthy	Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid all outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit outdoor exertion.



You can find the AQI in local newspapers, on TV, and on SC DHEC's Web page at [www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov).

**For the daily ozone forecast:**

- ▶ visit [www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov)
- ▶ watch your local TV weather forecast
- ▶ call 1-866-238-4973

